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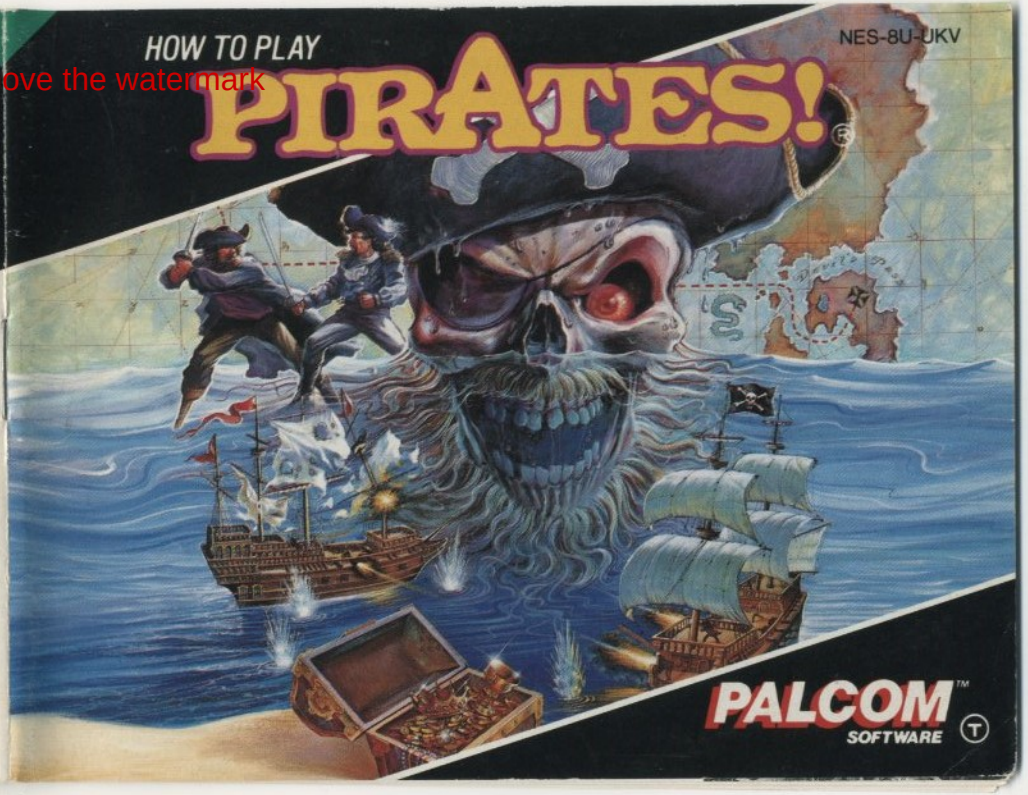
Printed in Japan

HOW TO PLAY

PIRATES!®

NES-8U-UKV



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WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF PALCOM!

You're now the proud owner of Palcom Software's version of PIRATES!® for the Nintendo Entertainment System. We suggest that you read the following instructions thoroughly before setting sail for the New World.

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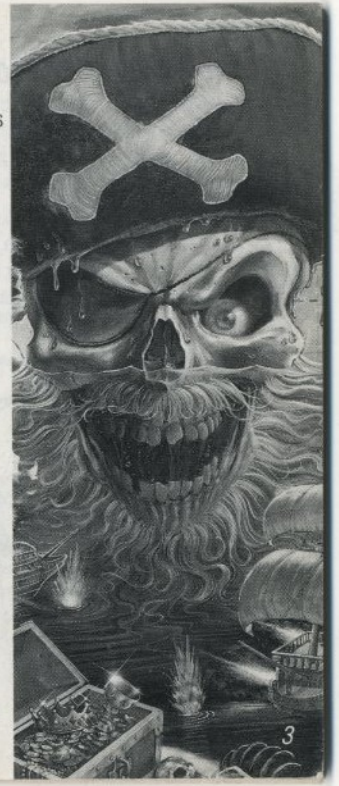
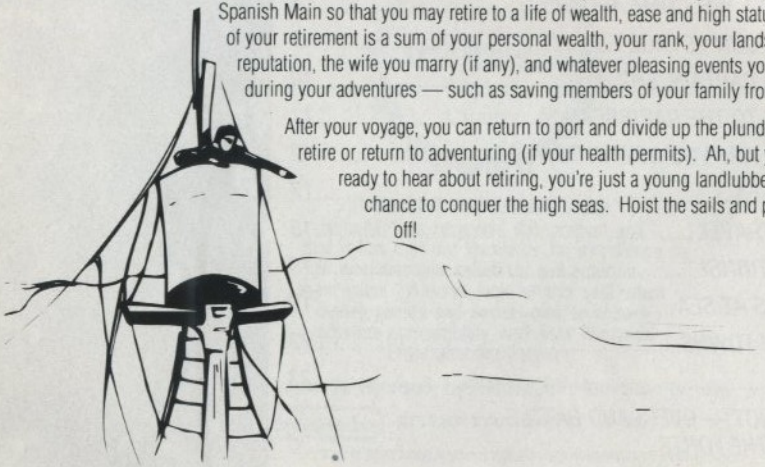


AHOY, MATEY! WELCOME ABOARD...

Journey back to a time of bold adventuring when the sword was mightier than the pen; a time of grand opportunities for someone with enough ambition, courage and muscle. From a humble start, you set out for the Caribbean to make a reputation for yourself, build (or steal) a fortune, meet beautiful women, unearth buried treasures and, with royal favor, perhaps even gain a title of nobility.

In PIRATES! you will do all that and more. Your goal is to make your fortune sailing the Spanish Main so that you may retire to a life of wealth, ease and high status. The quality of your retirement is a sum of your personal wealth, your rank, your lands, your reputation, the wife you marry (if any), and whatever pleasing events you accomplish during your adventures — such as saving members of your family from kidnappers.

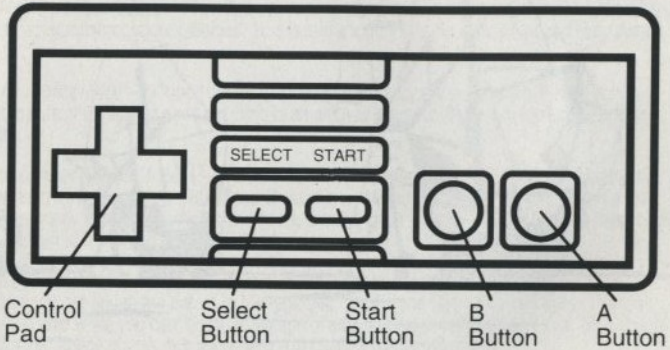
After your voyage, you can return to port and divide up the plunder, and then retire or return to adventuring (if your health permits). Ah, but you're not ready to hear about retiring, you're just a young landlubber seeking a chance to conquer the high seas. Hoist the sails and prepare to set off!



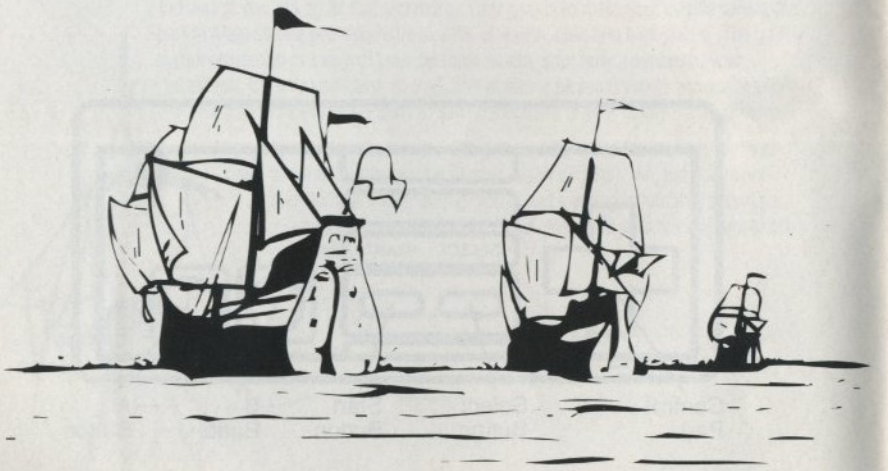
BEGINNING YOUR VOYAGE

Initial Opportunities

At the start of PIRATES! you will select options from various menus that will lead you into the game. Use the CONTROL PAD to move the sword cursor to your choice, then press SELECT or the A BUTTON to enter it.



The first menu to appear will ask if you wish to: *Start a New Career (new game), Continue a Saved Game, or Look at Hall of Fame.* Starting a new career begins a new adventure, from your first arrival in the New World to your well-earned retirement. Continuing a saved game allows you to pick up where you last saved your adventure.



Selecting a Historical Time Period

New players should select *No, thanks.* This automatically gives you the best time period for new players, *The Buccaneer Heroes (1660).* Other options include:

The Silver Empire (1560) — Spain controls all but one colony. The pickings are ripe for a fearless adventurer, but very difficult for an apprentice. The Spanish are strong and wealthy, and protective of their treasures.

Merchants & Smugglers (1600) — Like the Silver Empire, this era is dominated by the wealthy Spanish. However, they are a little weaker, but still a big challenge for the apprentice pirate.

The New Colonists (1620) — The Spanish hold on the Caribbean is weakening, and enemies of Spain are establishing more colonies. This is still a tough time for apprentice and journeyman pirates.

War for Profit (1640) — A great era for the independent buccaneer. Spanish military and economy are at the lowest point yet. This is an enjoyable era for any pirate looking to become wealthy.

The Buccaneer Heroes (1660) — The peak of swashbuckling adventure in the Caribbean, and the best era for apprentice pirates. Spanish wealth is returning, but their military is still a joke. There are many European colonies and ports, and the taverns are full of experienced men looking for a Captain to lead them to fame and fortune.

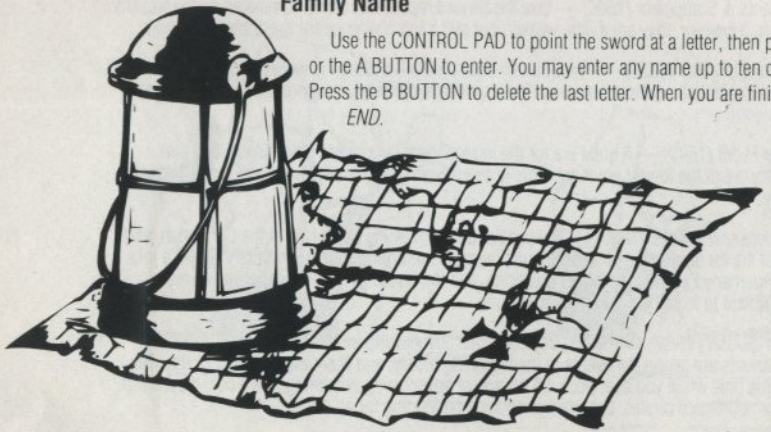
Pirates' Sunset (1680) — The last days of pirate adventuring in the Caribbean. European governments are taking the events in the region seriously, and Navy warships patrol the seas. Enjoy the time while you can, because the age of adventuring is coming to a close. It's a tough time for apprentice pirates, but interesting and challenging for all others.

Selecting a Nationality

New players should start with *English Buccaneer,* because this nation supported the privateer (that's the polite term for pirate) in the 16th Century. You may also choose *French Buccaneer, Dutch Adventurer, or Spanish Renegade.* French and Dutch are interesting choices, though their governments weren't as supportive as the English. Spanish is the most challenging. Remember, though, that your initial nationality does not require you to support that nation — in the 1680s many of France's admirals were Dutch buccaneers!

Family Name

Use the CONTROL PAD to point the sword at a letter, then press SELECT or the A BUTTON to enter. You may enter any name up to ten characters. Press the B BUTTON to delete the last letter. When you are finished, select *END.*



Difficulty Level

New players should select *Apprentice.* The play is easier because the men you recruit are more loyal and more experienced. However, they take a larger share of the loot when you divide the plunder. As you get better, try the advanced levels where sailing is more difficult and encounters are more challenging.

Special Skills

Starting at the Apprentice level ensures that all aspects of your adventure remain fairly easy. When you advance to more difficult levels, selecting one of the following skills will give you a decided advantage:

Skill at Fencing gives you quicker reflexes;

Skill at Navigation allows you to sail faster and easier;

Skill at Gunnery aids you in naval battles, improving the accuracy of your broadside shooting;

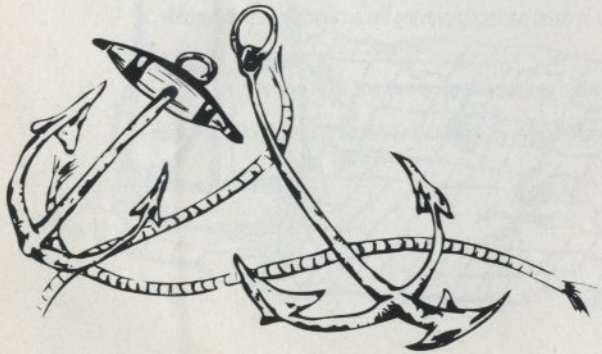
Wit and Charm is useful when dealing with governors and other nobles;

Skill at Medicine helps you preserve your health and extend the length of your career.

SO YOU'RE A CAPTAIN, EH?

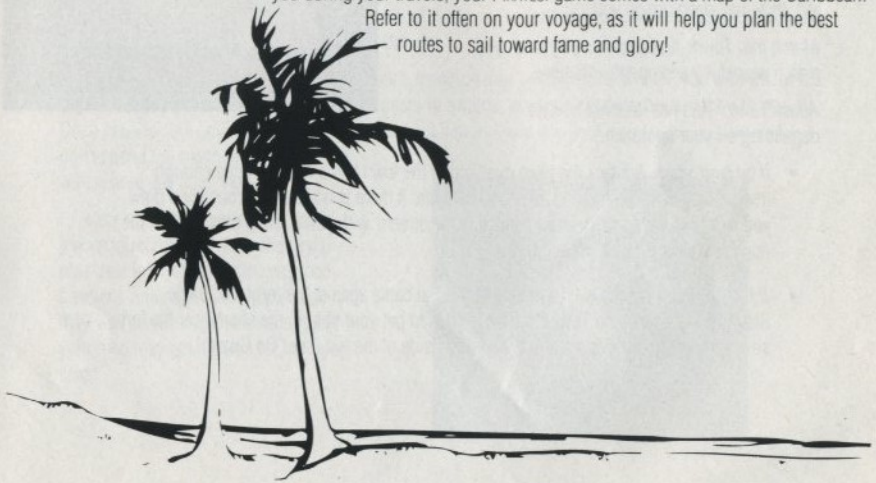
Being a success on the high seas means more than just blasting other boats out of the water — though you'll do plenty of that, too! You must master sword fighting, diplomacy, and navigational skills, as well. Being a successful pirate means being a shrewd businessman as well as a fearless fighter. As you sail the seas pillaging enemy vessels and plundering colonies, you will take gold, food, cannons and goods. You may choose to keep the guns and food for your own use, or sell them along with captured goods at nearby ports. Remember, large, wealthy settlements will generally offer more gold in trade for goods. You can make a larger profit by selling your plunder in richer ports, or even buying from cheap ports to sell in prospering ones.

You may also be asked by some governors to run special errands for them. If you accept and complete their missions, you may receive promotions in rank, land and money. If you are lucky, the governor's daughter may take a special interest in you, as well. Finding a bride would certainly make your retirement more enjoyable, wouldn't it?



YOUR GUIDE TO THE CARIBBEAN

Depending on the options you selected during the game set-up, you may start the game as a young sailor asked to fight the captain of the ship in a sword duel to gain the right to become the new captain. Or you may begin in a port as the captain of an experienced crew of buccaneers. However your travels begin, there are four main actions which cover most of your adventure: visiting ports of call, sword duels, navigating on the high seas, and engaging in sea and land battles. How you handle yourself in these situations will determine your success as a pirate. To help you during your travels, your PIRATES! game comes with a map of the Caribbean. Refer to it often on your voyage, as it will help you plan the best routes to sail toward fame and glory!



HEY SAILOR, ARE YOU NEW IN TOWN?

If you approach a town by land or sea, you will have a few options. These are:

Sail into Harbor: If approaching by sea, you sail peacefully up to the docks. If the nation is hostile toward you and the town is guarded by a fort, they may open fire on you.

March into Town: If approaching by land, you march peacefully and openly into town.

Attack Town: This has different effects, depending on your approach.

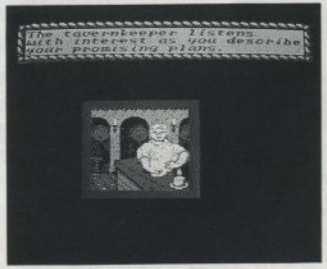
- *If by land,* you will attack the town overland. If the town has a fort and large enough troops, they will march out to meet you in battle. If there is no fort, the troops will draw you into town for hand-to-hand combat in the streets, with you dueling the leader of the opposing forces (see "On Guard!").
- *If by sea,* your flagship will have to fight a naval battle against the fort (see "Battle Stations! — Assault on Towns"). Your goal is to get your ship to the shore near the fort so your men can land and storm the seaward side of the fort (see "On Guard!").

Sneak into Town: This means you hide your ship and creep into town at night with a few of your trusted men. It's a good way to conduct some business if you fear being attacked, but you won't be able to recruit any men in the tavern or divide the plunder. You also run the risk of being recognized if your reputation is high. That could lead to a duel with the local guards.

Leave Town: Return to travelling around the Caribbean.

Upon your arrival, a message with information about the town (nationality, population and wealth) will be followed by a menu of options. Your choices include:

Visit the Governor: A visit to the Governor's mansion may be useful. He will tell you with whom his nation wars or allies. He may make special offers or awards, or even introduce his daughter to you. Once you visit the governor of a town, don't expect him to invite you back real soon — these men don't spend too much time chatting with coarse sea dogs like you.



Visit a Tavern: Taverns are good places to recruit men, hear the news, purchase information from seasoned travelers, and meet new people. You may visit taverns again and again, but your men may get restless for the open seas.

Trade with a Merchant: The merchants can buy and sell food, goods, export crops and cannons. If you have some booty from a previous raid, this is the place to unload it. They can also repair or buy ships.

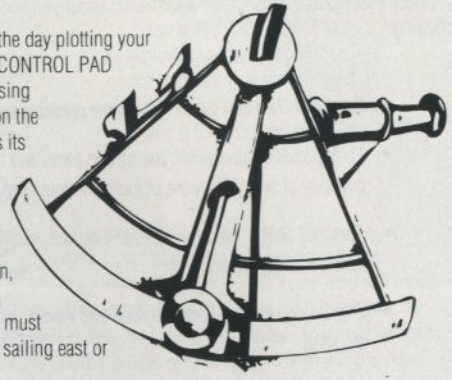
To buy or sell an item, move the pointer up or down to select the line with the proper item. Pressing the CONTROL PAD to the right will move the item from your inventory to the merchant's, thus selling items. Pressing to the left moves items to your ship, thus buying items. The items are measured in tons, and the menu displays how much weight your fleet's hold has space for. The price of items is listed in pieces of gold. Some towns will pay more or less than others, so it would be wise to shop around for the most profit.

Divide up the Plunder: As Captain, you get a fixed percent of the party's wealth (the percent varies with the difficulty level). The rest of the plunder is divided among the crew. Once they have their share, the crew will always leave, and you will be left with one of your ships and its share of food and cannons. If you wish to continue, a few months will pass as your ship is refitted. Then it will be up to you to recruit a new crew. If you retire, the status of your retirement will be revealed.

Check Information: This shows information about you and your party of sailors. The sub-menu offers the following:

- *Continue Travels:* Returns you to the previous activities.
- *Party Status:* Shows what your group owns and the attitude of your men (happy, pleased, unhappy or angry). Beware of mutiny if your men remain angry for too long.
- *Personal Status:* Shows your standing with each nation, and details of your age, wealth, health and reputation.
- *Ship's Log:* Recaps your activities and travels, with notes about information you've gathered.
- *Maps:* This is a file of all your map fragments. They'll lead to hidden treasures and provide clues to the whereabouts of your kidnapped family members. These secret locations won't be marked on your game map. Once you follow the map to the spot you think is the correct location, you must spend time searching the area (see "Search").
- *Cities:* Provides information about all the cities in the Caribbean during the era which you have selected. Point to the city with the CONTROL PAD and press SELECT. If events have changed the information, a message of *no information available* will appear until you visit that city or purchase information in a tavern.

- *Take a Sun Sight:* Allows you to spend the day plotting your position with the astrolabe. Moving the CONTROL PAD left/right moves the sight left/right. Pressing up/down raises/lowers the sight. Position the sight directly under the sun as it reaches its zenith (highest point) to obtain a reading of your latitude (north-south position). Finding the east-west position — or longitude — is done by dead reckoning. As an apprentice captain, your expert sailing master will provide a dead reckoning estimate. Otherwise you must guess based on how fast you have been sailing east or west.



- *Search:* If you have a map fragment, then you spend 3 days searching for the buried treasure or lost family member. If you're in the right spot, you'll find what's there. This option is not available in town or at sea.

- *Save Game:* Allows you to save the game in progress. (Only available in towns.)

Leave Town: Your party departs town, ready to set sail or march overland, as you prefer.

TRAVEL BY SEA

Sailing: To leave land and set sail, march your men up to the ship. Your fleet will set sail straight out into the sea. Use the CONTROL PAD to turn left *(port)* or right *(starboard)*.

Speed: The speed of your fleet depends on the type of ships you have and the direction of the wind. Your fleet will travel at the speed of your largest ship — this is also called the flagship. Most ships sail faster when the wind is blowing diagonally from the rear. With a little experience, you'll become a master sailor, and learn each ship's best "point of sailing" (the wind position at which the ship develops maximum speed).

Weather: To judge the winds at sea, watch the movement of the storm clouds. Notice that the wind is stronger around the storm fronts, and if you sail into them your ship may be tossed around. Good sailing requires more than a little judgement and skill to deal with shifting winds and storms.

Shoals and reefs: You can see where the sea breaks up over shallow coastal waters. If you sail into these areas, your ship could damage its bottom. If your fleet only has smaller ships — pinnaces and/or sloops — you can sail over these hazards with little risk.

Anchoring: You can only drop anchor in shallow water. To do this, sail right up to the coast. Your ship will stop and the crew will disembark automatically. If you anchor at town, you will have special options (see "Hey Sailor, Are You New in Town?").

Pausing and getting information: You can press the START BUTTON to pause the game. Press the SELECT BUTTON to go to the Information menu explained above.

Minimum crew: It takes at least eight men to sail a ship. If you have less than eight men per ship, your men will abandon one.

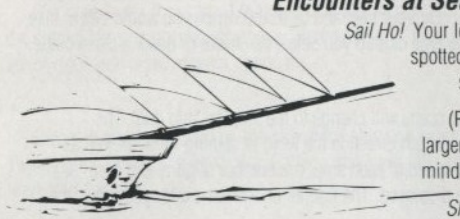
OVERLAND TRAVEL

When your party is on land, you can travel in eight directions. Press the CONTROL PAD in the direction you wish to march.

BATTLE STATIONS!

There are two types of battles you will fight from your ship: ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore. Ships always fire their cannons broadside, that is, straight out from the port and starboard sides of the ship. Forts, however, may fire in any direction.

Encounters at Sea



Sail Ho! Your lookout will let you know when another ship has been spotted coming over the horizon. You may investigate by sailing closer, or sail away and avoid an encounter.

(Remember, small ships are more maneuverable than larger ones, but are slower in a strong wind. Keep this in mind when deciding how to handle an encounter.)

Ship in View: If you have investigated, your lookout will tell you what type of ship you are now facing. You might be able to avoid an encounter by choosing the option *Sail Away*.

See Her Colors: Investigating further will give you a report on the other ship's nationality. You can then close in for a ship-to-ship battle, pull up alongside for the latest news, or try to sail away. Some hostile ships, pirates and pirate-hunters may not let you sail away without a battle, regardless of which option you select.

Select your flagship: If you choose to do battle, your first mate will report on your crew and armament, and weather conditions. You'll also see a list of ships in your fleet and be asked which you would like to take into battle. Consider your choice carefully, since the type of ship you select can make or break a close battle.

When the encounter leads to a battle at sea, your scene will change to the ship-to-ship duel. The information on the bottom of the screen will tell you which direction the wind is coming from, as well as details about you and your opponent. The type and speed of each ship, the number of guns and men remaining, a damage report, and current orders are displayed. The figures on the left are for your ship, the figures on the right are your opponent.

Sailing: Similar to travel by sea. You may turn right/left using the CONTROL PAD, or remain on course.

Changing sails: You always begin a battle with your battle sails. These are smaller sails and are less likely to be damaged by your opponent. Unfortunately, they are only half as fast as full sails. To raise full sails, press the CONTROL PAD up, and press down to lower your sails to battle position. Notice that raising and lowering sails takes time, and your men can't reload the cannons if they're trimming the sails.

Fire broadside: Press the A button to fire your cannons. Your brave gun captains will automatically fire from the side of the ship nearest the enemy. Remember that you fire broadside, so you must turn your ship so that its left or right side is facing your opponent.

Effects of gunfire depend on the size of the ship you're attacking and the number of guns you have available. Twenty guns hitting a Spanish War Galleon may have little effect, but 20 guns hitting a small pinnace could leave it in flames!

Escape from battle: To escape a tough naval battle, sail away from your opponent. Once you're far enough away, the battle may end. You will lose one of your ships when you sail away, but it may be worth it to live to fight another day. Also, in long battles, the approach of night may cause both sides to end the battle.

Grapple and board: If you sail alongside or into another ship, the ships may automatically grapple for a boarding battle. In the days of privateering, the captain of the ship was expected to lead the men into battle. You will take on the captain of the opposing ship in a sword duel (see "On Guard!").

Surrender: If your power is overwhelming, your opponent may choose to give up without a fight.

Plunder: Once you have won a battle, either by force or by a causing a surrender, you can elect to take a prize ship and add it to your fleet, or simply plunder the ship and then sink it. You transfer goods to your ship the same way you sell goods to a merchant: use the CONTROL PAD to move the pointer up and down the list, and press left to take items, right to leave them behind (throw overboard). You will automatically take all the ship's gold, but it doesn't change the amount of cargo space left in the hold of your ship. When you have finished transferring items, press the SELECT BUTTON.

Assault on Towns

If you sail into town and choose to attack, you will be transferred to a close-up ship-to-land battle scene. You will see the same battle information (as the ship-to-ship battles) listing your ship and the defending fort. The object is to sail your ship up to the land nearest the fort. Your men will then jump ashore and storm the fort. The action will switch to a sword duel between you and the commander of the fort.

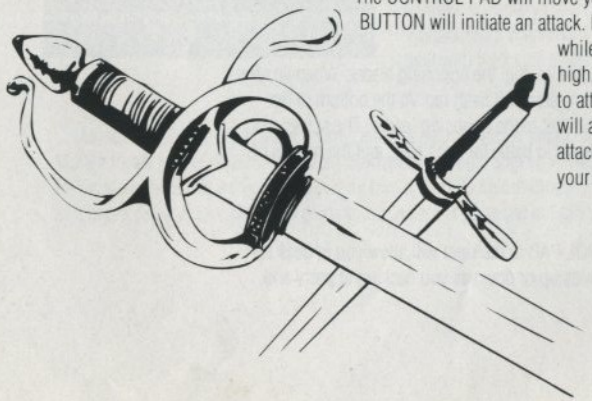
The number of men participating in the assault on the town will depend on the size of your flagship. If your forces are successful, you may plunder the town. If your attack is overwhelming, you may even be asked to replace the government of the town with the nationality of your choice.

ON GUARD!

While brains and cunning made many a pirate successful, there were times when these men let their swords speak for them. Some opponents will understand nothing but the slash of cold steel. As a proud captain, you will be expected to lead your men into battle, not stay in the back and give orders. If you do not master the skills of fencing, your men will lose their battles, and you will lose your honor.

Basic Fencing Skills

To Attack: You will always appear on the right side of the screen, and your opponent will be on the left. The CONTROL PAD will move you left or right, and the A BUTTON will initiate an attack. Press the CONTROL PAD up while using the A BUTTON to attack high, press down and the A BUTTON to attack low. The A BUTTON alone will attack at mid-level. These fast attacking moves use the point of your weapon rather than the edge.



Slashing Attacks: A slashing attack is a slower move which uses the edge of the blade. It causes more damage to your opponent, but leaves you more open to attack. Use the CONTROL PAD and the B BUTTON just as you do for normal attacks.

To Parry: You can watch your opponents moves to determine what type of attack he will attempt, and try to block it with a parrying move of your own. Press the CONTROL PAD up to parry a high attack, down for a low attack, or leave it in the middle for a mid-level parry.

Use combinations of these moves to duel the opposing leader. When an attack move strikes its target, that person's shirt will flash red. At the bottom of the screen you will see your name and that of the opposing leader. The screen also displays the number of men engaged in battle for each side, and the morale of both forces.

Retreat: Pressing the CONTROL PAD to the right will allow you to back up from your opponent. You may press up or down as you back up to parry and retreat.

Leadership In Battle

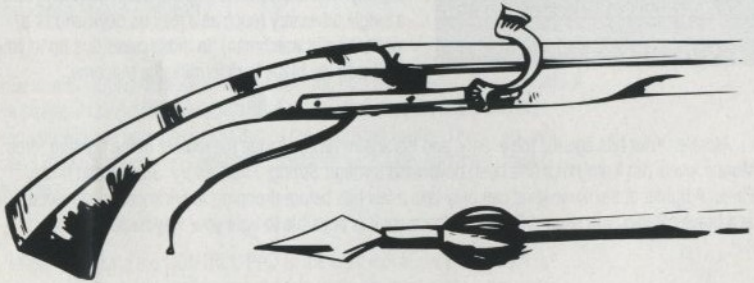
Number of men: As you duel, battle rages on around you. You will be able to see how your crew is doing in battle by watching the Force indicator on the screen. Beware! Even if you are winning your duel, if your forces are reduced to one man (you), you may lose the battle anyway. The exception to this are duels between you and a single adversary (such as a jealous boyfriend or a vigilant night watchman). In those cases it is up to your skill with the blade to determine the outcome.

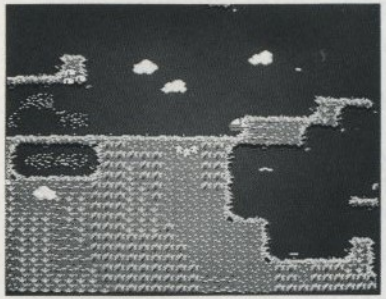
Morale: Your hits against the enemy, and his against you, change the morale of the fighting forces. Morale levels run from *Wild!* (the best) downward through *Strong, Firm, Angry, Shaken* and finally *Panic.* A fighter at the panic level can only take a few hits before dropping to his knees to surrender. But, as a brave captain, you shouldn't give up, because it is possible to fight your way back to victory.

Pike and Shot — Overland Battle — Attacking the Forts

The English, French and Dutch pirates were no fools. They knew that the wealth carried by Spanish ships had to come from the Spanish towns. Close attention was paid to discovery of new gold mines and the prosperity of Spanish settlements in the West Indies. In order to gain these riches, the pirates had to storm forts and overcome military forces. You'll face the same challenge when you approach a town by land and choose to attack.

(Note: Controlling your forces on land is quite unique. Read these instructions carefully to make sure you really understand the tactics of land battle.)





Giving Orders: In a land battle your crew is divided into two or three groups. Your objective is to get one or more of the groups to the fort. There you will meet the opposing leader in a duel (see "On Guard!"). To move a group of men on the screen, use your CONTROL PAD, just as you do in travelling by land. To change the group you are moving to another group, press the SELECT BUTTON.

Pause: Press the START BUTTON.

Combat: Your men fight automatically when they are in range. You have no control over the fighting. After all, you could hardly be expected to control the actions of such bloodthirsty buccaneers! The group will fight in two ways; they will fire muskets at short range, or engage in hand-to-hand combat.

Musket Fire: Your men will only fire their muskets when the group is not moving. If no enemy is in range, they will not fire.

Hand-to-hand Combat: This occurs when your men move directly into a group of enemy forces.

Visibility: Men in woods and towns are hard to see. If you station a group of men in some woods, they won't be seen by the enemy. You could then move a group of men into the open beyond your first group and hope to draw the enemy toward you. When they pass the group in the woods, the first group can sneak up from behind, or move ahead into the fort.

At the bottom of the screen is a report of both forces engaged in conflict. The details about your men pertain only to the *current active group.* The report tells you the number of men in that group, the number of muskets they have, the morale of both sides, and the type of terrain each group is currently in.

A GAZETTEER OF SHIPS (CIRCA 1690)

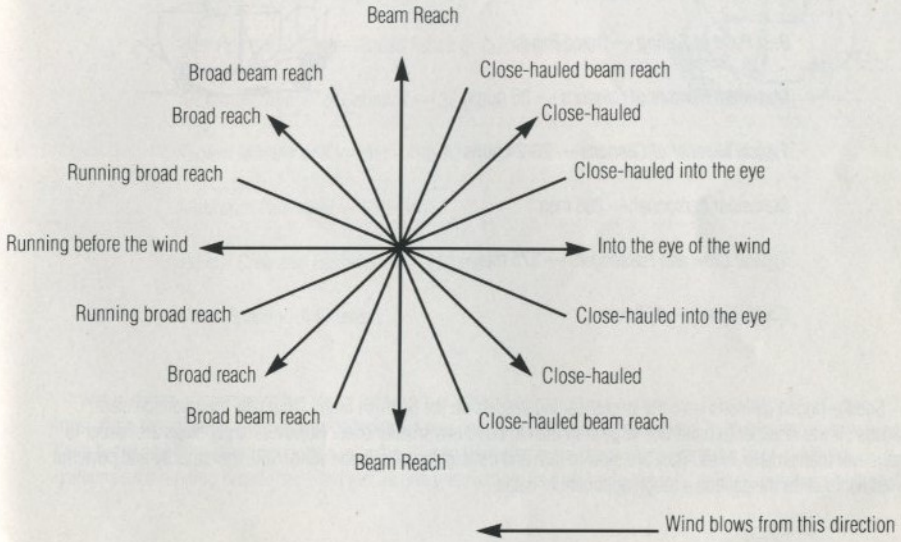
Among the wide range of types, sizes and rigs of sailing vessels in the Caribbean, nine basic approaches to shipbuilding can be observed. Although every ship was individually designed and built, shipbuilders copied one another, producing ships of remarkable similarity. The general types are summarized below.

Definitions

Speeds are given in leagues (about 2.5 miles) travelled during a watch (about 4 hours). The first value is best speed in a light wind, the second is best speed in a strong wind.

Best Point of Sailing refers to the wind direction in which the ship makes its best speed. Each type of ship has a different point of sailing.

The diagram below illustrates the terms for different points of sailing.



Spanish Galleon

Best Speed — 7-15 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Broad Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 36 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 20-24 guns

Maximum Personnel — 288 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 275 men

Cargo Space — 160 tons

Square-rigged galleons were the largest sailing vessels on the Spanish Main. Originally they were created because it was cheaper to build one large ship than to build two smaller ones. However, larger ships are harder to maneuver than smaller ones. They are slow to turn and difficult to sail into the wind. Still, the capacity and powerful armament makes the galleon a tough opponent in battle.

Spanish War Galleon

Best Speed — 7-15 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Broad Reach or Running Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 32 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 28-32 guns

Maximum Personnel — 256 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 250 men

Cargo Space — 140 tons

War galleons are similar to the merchant type, but they have less carrying capacity and more men and guns. The most important difference is that war galleons are manned by soldiers and commanded by noble captains, making them brave and formidable opponents in battle. Due to the better crew, these ships are faster than merchant galleons on a running broad reach, but just as unmaneuverable as their more peaceful cousins in other situations.

Fast Galleon

Best Speed — 9-12 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Broad Reach or Running Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 28 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 24 guns

Maximum Personnel — 224 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 215 men

Cargo Space — 120 tons

The northern Europeans refined the basic Galleon design, revising the sails for more flexibility. The result was a smaller ship than the Spanish Galleon, but one which was faster in light winds and considerably more maneuverable. However, it still shows the disadvantage of all galleons — poor speed when close-hauled (sailing into the wind).

Frigate

Best Speed — 9-12 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Broad Reach or Running Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 28 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 26-28 guns

Maximum Personnel — 224 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 190 men

Cargo Space — 120 tons

Square-rigged frigates were fast sailers, fairly handy to maneuver, and faster than most square-rigged ships when close-hauled. Frigates were useful for patrols and independent cruises. Almost all frigates built for the Crown were used as naval warships. Their well-trained crews made them dangerous opponents at any time. Most pirates and buccaneers would disappear over the horizon when a frigate appeared!

Merchantman

Best Speed — 9-12 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Broad Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 24 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 6-12 guns

Maximum Personnel — 198 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 20-45 men

Cargo Space — 100 tons

These square-riggers were a trader's dream! They had large cargo capacity, space for numerous guns, and plenty of room for crew and passengers. They could also be sailed with a small crew to save money. Most merchantmen are peaceful traders, carrying large cargos and sometimes a bit of wealth. Pirates always looked forward to capturing a "juicy" merchantman. However, some of these ships were converted to pirate vessels, armed with many guns and bloodthirsty crews, making them extremely dangerous.

Cargo Fluyt

Best Speed — 9-12 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Running Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 20 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 4-12 guns

Maximum Personnel — 160 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 12-24 men

Cargo Space — 80 tons

Fluyts were invented by the Dutch around 1600, then widely copied throughout northern Europe. Essentially a smaller but more economical merchantman, it can be sailed with a tiny crew, but still maintains a large cargo space. They could also sail into shallower waters which were unsuitable to larger ships. As the smallest of the square-riggers, fluyts made poor warships. They were usually manned by peaceful traders who would often surrender after a broadside or two. They were unpopular as pirate ships.

Barque

Best Speed — 9-12 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Broad Beam Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 16 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 4-6 guns

Maximum Personnel — 128 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 12-36 men

Cargo Space — 60 tons

The largest of the fore-and-aft rigged ships, barques are a traditional design similar to many Mediterranean merchant and war ships. Many barques were built in the Caribbean rather than Europe because they were good sailers on quiet seas, but could have trouble on the rough voyages across the Atlantic.

Barques are the slowest close-hauled sailers among the fore-and-aft riggers, and the least maneuverable, yet the advantages of the rig are so great that they were still better than the square-rigged ships in both categories. In addition, they carried oars, and could therefore be sailed straight into the wind. Due to the size and handling, a pirate barque can be a tough opponent.

Sloop

Best Speed — 9-10 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Broad Reach or Broad Beam Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 12 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 4-6 guns

Maximum Personnel — 96 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 8-12 men

Cargo Space — 40 tons

Another Dutch design, sloops became very popular in the Caribbean. They are extremely fast and maneuverable — better than almost any ship in light winds. Close-hauled they sail very fast, and with oars they can move directly into the wind. Most importantly, they have a shallow draft, allowing them to sail over shoals and reefs with little risk. The main weakness is that in strong winds it sails considerably slower than the large square-rigged ships. In such cases, the only advantage is the maneuverability and superior speed close-hauled or into the wind.

Despite its modest size and cargo capacity, its maneuverability made it the preferred choice of many buccaneers over larger, more powerful crafts. In fact, the English Royal Navy began building sloops for its own use as pirate-catchers.

Pinnace

Best Speed — 9-10 leagues

Best Point of Sailing — Broad Beam Reach or Broad Reach

Maximum Number of Cannons — 8 guns

Typical Number of Cannons — 2-4 guns

Maximum Personnel — 64 men

Typical Crew and Passengers — 8-12 men

Cargo Space — 20 tons

Before the sloops, the pinnaces were the primary small craft of the Caribbean. Like the sloop, the pinnace is very fast and maneuverable, with a draft that permits sailing over shoals and reefs. Sailing upwind (close-hauled), it is even faster than a sloop, and much faster when rowing into the wind. However, a pinnace is much smaller than a sloop, with little cargo capacity or room for armament and crew. Still, many pirate raids were conducted with pinnaces crammed with fighting men. Sir Francis Drake himself abandoned his merchantmen in favor of pinnaces when raiding on the Spanish Main.

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